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pathy with your object. I like the optimism of your name which calls for the promotion rather than the protection of liberal studies; and, more than all, I have an abiding faith in your broad vision, your deep sympathy and your comprehensive knowledge of educational problems.

GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL,  
PHILADELPHIA.

KATHARINE M. PUNCHEON.

### ONE WAY TO TEACH LATIN

The demand for more definite constructive criticism of the teaching of Latin which appeared in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7. 97-98, 145-146, seems to me a reasonable one. We can really be of little service to one another until we are willing to explain not what ought to be done but what we actually do in our class-rooms. Personally I have the grandest ideals of what Latin teaching should be and I never care to read another man's opinion of what we *should* do in the class-room for the simple reason that my own ideals keep me busy enough. In actual practice I find that they meet so many obstacles—set up doubtless by the demon of things as they are—that by the end of the school year they are mutilated beyond hope of recognition. When, however, a teacher is willing frankly to show how he has faced the difficulties that beset us all and what his experience has been, we are all anxious to learn and glad to set him down as a benefactor. Accordingly I wish to take my own medicine in the hope that some one who is hoarding secrets of value may be led to communicate his knowledge as freely as I proffer my trifles.

Judging from my own experience I have long been under the impression that our greatest fault as teachers is unconscious hypocrisy. We know our subject quite well, we teach it quite well, and then we naturally suppose that our pupils have learned it quite well. And here lies our error. We forget the old maxim that taught us never to under estimate the ignorance of our pupils, and we ascribe to them knowledge which they might have, which indeed they ought to have, but which they have not, and which, I regret to say, they don't care to have—if they can get along without it. In fact this fault is so widespread that I think that most of the present criticism of our schools, when justified, is really caused by this one deficiency.

In my own work I have found it facing me at every turn. Owing to the peculiar organization of our school my relations with my pupils are so personal and intimate that there is absolutely no line of any kind between them and me. This circumstance has given me opportunities to understand the attitude of the scholars which the average teacher can not possess; and I should have to be blind not to become conscious of the failing to which I have alluded. In my Vergil class, however, I have employed a method which has enabled me at least to estimate what my class really knows far more accurately than I could ordinarily.

The class is small, averaging about twenty pupils. These are usually delightful as individuals and as a class, but I am sorry to say they manifest no great enthusiasm for Latin. They look upon Vergil as the last Latin obstacle on the path to a diploma and after the first month of polite interest they are content to recite when called upon and for the rest to sleep—figuratively if not literally<sup>1</sup>.

Some years ago I contrived to infuse some life into the class by insisting that the pupils do practically all the work done. So successful has the plan been that I have never seen occasion to modify it.

The method is very simple. I call upon a pupil to translate and after he has read the requisite number of lines I ask him to stop. Then the other students, without raising their hands or paying any attention to me, point out the mistakes and ask whatever questions they choose. If there is a difference of opinion about a construction they argue it out, without referring to me except as a last resort. As a rule a student is not supposed to make more than one criticism at a time. I have occasionally left the class-room, but this proceeding is, I believe, frowned upon as a kind of breach of contract. In addition to their regular work students receive credit for the criticisms they make and for all questions which they ask and can answer themselves. Those pupils who fail to do a reasonable amount of this class-work have their marks lowered. It has to be made absolutely clear that pupils who translate are to be marked only on the teacher's judgment of their recitations and that nothing is to be subtracted on account of questions asked or criticisms made upon their work by fellow-pupils. Unless the class is convinced of the teacher's sincerity in this particular little can be accomplished.

When I first introduced this system of reciting I was surprised to find a great deal of opposition—good-humored but real. I had thought that such a slight change would be received without comment, but I soon discovered my mistake. For weeks I was obliged to defend my course by arguing with various individuals out of class and I am not sure yet that they were ever convinced. As one boy put it the scheme was not fair. He had to study an hour or so on Vergil outside of class and now I insisted that he work just as hard during the period. Soon, however, the plan came to be looked upon as a more or less harmless vagary of a perhaps well-meaning but certainly erratic teacher. During that year I was repeatedly asked when they were going back to the old system.

<sup>1</sup> I regret that I am obliged to admit having such mediocre classes. It is especially humiliating when I realize, as I listen to some teachers talk, that in a Vergil class all that they have to do is to put the last polish upon a well-nigh finished product, which emerges from the process a cultured citizen. I have to feel satisfied if I have succeeded in coaxing a few of my class to think occasionally for themselves. Here let me also record my envy of Dr. Radin, whose experience with students has been so fortunate that he can even evolve an hypothetical boy who will, when the vocabulary in his text fails him, turn to Roget's Thesaurus (shall we say to the word *belief* with its two or three hundred expressions?) and then with the aid of a dictionary select the exact equivalent of his Latin word. I am chagrined to say that I am sometimes forced to urge my pupils to use their notes.

As has already appeared the method is not novel but is based upon rather elementary principles of pedagogy. My only defense for mentioning it is the fact that I have never heard any one explain how it works when applied in Latin. Accordingly I have inferred that other teachers might like to know my actual experience with it.

Its disadvantages are few. It certainly does use up time. The more it is employed, however, the less time it takes. It is exasperating for a teacher to sit quiet while his class wrestles over a usage that he could explain in a moment, but I am convinced that in general the results justify his remaining still. Of course in such cases I attempt to use discretion. The bashful students suffer somewhat, but as a rule they gain courage and learn to forget themselves. Rarely—in fact very rarely—pupils lose their tempers or become discourteous to one another. Here again, however, long practice in discussion eliminates the faults it brings to light. Boys often shrink from criticising girls (I have never known the opposite to be true), but they usually overcome this diffidence and the (possibly reprehensible) desire to 'show up' some exasperatingly bright member of the other sex quickly leads to sharp thrusts and ripostes. Finally it is undeniable that the accelerator of the method with its beneficent rivalry is not eagerness to learn Latin but a desire for marks. Although I must admit this is a low motive, I can not see that under the old plan any higher ideal was dominant.

On the other hand this mode of conducting recitations enables me to discover exactly what my pupils really know; and I should not advise a teacher who shrinks from facing soul-sickening truths to adopt it. I have been sometimes appalled at the unguessed depths of ignorance revealed by an argument between two students. The heightened interest is another decided advantage. To be sure, interest is not by any means always at fever heat, but it is constantly higher than it was. I do not know the explanation, but it is a fact that more students will listen—I mean really listen—to a class-mate explaining something to another than will listen to a teacher. Moreover, the plan tends to make pupils study more carefully and more regularly. A girl who is in the habit of preparing only two out of three lessons is more easily detected and, although many members of the class still take an occasional day's vacation, the number is appreciably less. No student likes to have his ignorance exposed by a class-mate. If a teacher does it, it can be borne with resignation, but at the hands of a fellow-student it is an humiliating experience to be avoided at all costs. I have known boys to spend an extra hour upon a Vergil lesson in order to render themselves invulnerable, and others to work similarly that they may bring about the downfall of a rival or get revenge for the mortification of a previous recitation. It is hardly necessary to say that what is learned in this manner is better learned. Further, I have found, that aside

from any increased knowledge of Latin, the method has been worth while in developing the pupil's personality, in breaking the ice between the sexes, and in training certain capabilities that will probably be useful in after life. Ordinary class-room practice—and I am as guilty as any one—in itself trains for nothing I know of unless it be the penitentiary. But that has been said ages since.

In conclusion, I may note that with all classes the plan is not equally successful. It always works, but some classes—for example, the present one—never carry it out so fully as others. All of them tend to lean on the teacher in a most discouraging way. The helplessness that is commonly manifest when they are thrown on their own resources hardly bodes well for independent action in after life.

THE NEW JERSEY STATE NORMAL AND MODEL SCHOOLS,  
TRENTON, N. J. CHARLES R. AUSTIN.

## REVIEWS

Livy, The Second Punic War: Book XXI and Selections from Books XXII–XXX. Edited by James C. Egbert. New York: The Macmillan Company (1913). Pp. xvii + 306. 60 cents.

From the general editor of a series one naturally expects a volume exhibiting in a notable degree the characteristic features of that series. This is the case with Professor Egbert's Livy. We find the conservative standard text, the brief but accurate and useful Notes and Introduction, and the low price. Livy's position as the Latin author most popular with freshmen should be strengthened by the appearance of this edition. Professor Dennison had already (1908) published in this series his edition of Book I and Selections from Books II–X, so that all the portions of Livy usually read are now available in this series. No set of selections will suit every one, but I for one am satisfied with Professor Egbert's choice. He gives Book XXI in full; XXII, 1–7 (Trasumene Lake) and 39–52 (Cannae); XXVI, 1–15 (Siege of Capua); XXVII, 40–51 (Metaurus); XXX, 29–37 (Zama). Thus the most striking episodes in the Second Punic War are included.

The text is in general that of Weissenborn-Müller. For my own part, I should like to see a text of Livy based on a new examination of the MSS, but such a thing is not to be looked for in an edition of this sort, and Professor Egbert's text is as satisfactory as any. Of course every teacher of Livy will have his own pet emendations, but a standard text has one merit not always found in texts based largely on conjectures—it can be translated. In 21. 43. 4 I should have preferred to retain *habentibus* and the second *Padus* with P, and in a few other cases I should have chosen other readings, but no serious objections to the text occur to me. I have noted only a few typographical errors in the text.